in the market and commenced purchases under PSS to provide benefit of the scheme to the farmers. NAFED is also undertaking procurement of Copra under PSS in the States of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka and Lakshdweep Islands.

NAFED being the central nodal agency for implementation of PSS with respect to Oilseeds and Pulses, remains in full preparedness for implementation of the Scheme and intervenes in the market as and when required. A close monitoring of prices of commodities prevailing in different States is done on regular basis for this purpose. At the time of undertaking purchases, timely payment is released to the farmers and there have been no complaints in this regard. Best efforts are made by NAFED to ensure that the benefits of the scheme are passed on to the maximum number of farmers and the procurement operations are carried out as efficiently and smoothly as possible.

Plant protection strategy

137. SHRI MOHAMMED ADEEB: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the plant protection strategy and activities;

(b) what are the arrangements in place for the purpose; and

(c) the steps being taken to make the farmers aware of the need for plant protection and what are the facilities available for the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) to (c) Government has launched a scheme titled "Strengthening and Modernization of Pest Management Approach in India" since 1991-92 adopting Integrated Pest Management (IPM) as main plank of plant protection strategy in overall crop production programme.

The Government has established 31 Central Integrated Pest Management Centres in 28 States and one Union Territory (UT). The mandate of these Centres is pest/disease monitoring, production and release of bio-control agents/bio-pesticides, conservation of bio-control agents and imparting training to Agriculture/Horticulture Extension Officers and farmers at grass root level by organizing Farmers Field Schools (FFSs). Basic aim of FFSs is to train the farmers on the latest IPM technology so that they are able to take decisions in pest management operation. Under the scheme 12,111 FFSs have been organized wherein 50,716 farmers in different States/UTs have been trained. Also IPM package of practices for pest/disease management have been developed for 77 major crops in collaboration with State Departments of Agriculture/Horticulture/ICAR Institutions/State Agriculture Universities which have been circulated to all States/UTs and are available at the website *www.dacnet.nic.in/ppin* for use by the extension functionaries and farmers.